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Try Debating If You Like to Argue

by Gretchen Prouty

THE woman always wins in the battle of words. Or so it turned out in a radio debate on cigarettes, men versus women, last year. The debate brought one of the biggest responses of letters of the year. One hundred to one they poured in, in favor of the women, agreeing that we should abolish cigarettes because they ruined fine minds, and were probably the cause of the depression.

The women talked first, and perhaps everybody on the other side of the question turned off the radio at the beginning, so as an experiment, the debate is going to be repeated this year, letting the men have the first word, with the question reversed, to see whether the response will come back 100 to 1 the other way.

Anybody who wishes to may try out for radio debate at Iowa State College. The contestants are requested to appear at the radio station at a given time, bringing along something to read with which they are familiar. They are judged entirely upon voice, but once chosen they are expected to work hard, drawing up the case to be presented.

AS for the main debate squad, it is divided into women's, men's, and beginners' squads. "Anyone who makes average grades can debate, no matter how dumb they are," says F. L. Whan, of the public speaking department, in charge of the debate squad.

The beginners' squad is not allowed to debate in regular events until they have taken work in logic and speaking. This is an accredited course, listed in the catalogue, meeting three times a week. Then during the winter and spring, students participate in regular debates, which are considered their "lab" work. In the spring the number of credits to be allowed for the work done is determined. Two members are assigned a subject, and together they work up a case. They meet with the instructor, and all further work is done thus, through conferences. The instructor arranges practice debates between various teams on the squad who are working on the same question.

Last quarter, four practice debates were given before various groups, such as high school conventions, demonstrating styles and types of debating. Opponents were, Grinnell, Iowa University, Kirksville Teachers College, and London University, 1,500 students turning out for the latter. Another debate with Iowa State Teachers Col-

lege was part of the Dad's Day program and was done in Congressional style.

Interest in debate has gradually been increasing at Iowa State College. In 1930-31, there were 12 men debaters and 3 women, while the 1934-35 list shows 42 men and 12 women. Who are these coeds who show their powers in the realms of logic? Members of the



squad last year were Naomi Schlesselman and Helen Gambell. Ruby Stewart, Eva Young, Dorothy Geiger, Ione Curtis, and Phyllis Christy are girls who are new on the squad, but who have debated this year. In the group that will be trying its persuasive abilities for the first time next quarter are Elizabeth Thornburg, Mary Jacobs, Maude Lewis, Marion Hoppe, and Dorothy Rentschler.

LAST year girls were on the team which made a trip to Missouri, debating four or five schools during the course of the itinerary.

A debater, besides having other qualities, must be tactful and possess social aplomb—that is to say, he must be well versed in the gentle art of easing himself out of what is known as the "embarrassing situation." Imagine yourself, an earnest debater, presenting your sincere views on the farm situation. You are expecting to address 300 Farm Bureau members; at the last minute a delegation of 350 Farmers' Union members walk in just as you are about to begin. These farmers think you know what you are talking about, they have ideas of their own and the two factions notoriously do not get along. Wise Iowa State debaters find the best solution is to pre-

sent their own case and quietly steal away, leaving the audience to a more than spirited open-forum discussion of farm problems in general.

This is just a cross-section of the extension debate program. Iowa State College is the first school to institute such a program and it has proved very successful. It was found difficult to provide audiences for the local debates as the squad increased. Farm audiences over the country wanted programs for their meetings, and were willing to pay expenses. These farm groups choose the question and another school is secured to debate the other side. More requests than can possibly be handled have been received. There will be at least 30 scheduled this year in Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska and other states.

College debating has taken a new turn in the last five or ten years according to Mr. Whan. Decisions have been found to be non-essential and have been dispensed with. The squad itself has voted against judges. This is not because they are afraid of losing, either, as they have held their own in all tournaments entered. The aim is not winning the debate, but what the student can get out of it. They want to really interest the audience, make their listeners like them.

NO stars are turned out by such a system of mass debating as is carried on here, but it serves the goal in view, to give the people who want it, training, and it is not just an extra-curricular game. It is hoped that everyone on the squad can participate in at least four debates this year.

Beginning Dec. 20, there will be a radio debate every Thursday at 11:15 during winter quarter. Letters come flooding in, particularly after encounters on such questions as cigarettes, beer, and the high school debate question. The listener is asked to vote on which side did the better debating and which side he believes in. Some of the letters are rabid, and invariably the writers vote for the side they believe in themselves, but at least they are indicative of a large listening audience.

Some of the 15 scheduled radio debates worth listening to this quarter will be: Shall we abolish cigarettes? Should cosmetics be condemned? The state high school question on Federal aid to Education—to which all the young high school orators will listen feverishly, waterways, munitions, socialized medicine—this should draw a big response, prohibition—has repeal increased respect for law? and should women stay in the home?

The men's chief question for this year sounds very impressive: Should we abolish the agricultural adjustment program after the 1935 season? The

(Turn to page 16)

To Argufy

(Begins on page 11)

secondary one sounds just as deep: Should Iowa and other states adopt the unicameral legislative plan of Nebraska?

The women's chief question (don't be alarmed) is: Should all nations abolish the export of arms and munition?—yes, you guessed right. The subtle meaning is that it would stop war.

But it is not all so dry and deep. Last year three debaters accompanied by Mr. Whan took a trip to Austin, Texas.

They made a little side excursion to Arkansas Pass several miles out by ferry—not as one might suppose, to debate—but rather, to fish. They fished so long and so late that they missed the last ferry and had to charter it to bring them back. The fish story is than one doughty debater caught 200 fish that day with a pole and line—all the way from stingerees to cat-fish.

All-college debates for the entertainment of students on the campus, similar to the English debate, are scheduled with the University of Honolulu, the University of California and perhaps the University of New York. Phi Sigma, a debating society to which all the debaters belong, takes care of all housing.

Increasing interest has been shown in debate and more and more people have wanted to participate, even though they had to plug through a course in the subject. Although no urgent call is made for more debaters, unless facilities for handling them are greatly increased, if you are interested, want the training, and are willing to work, you can make a place for yourself on the squad.

A Tough Spot

(Begins on page 3)

them—quite the reverse—for in no other occupation do people so clearly reveal their characters and background as in eating. Even the sounds in a dining room indicate the kind of people dining.

And, I believe that in a public dining room, people most clearly reveal their true breeding. Often the poorly dressed patron is the most courteous and kind to those who serve them and this is the true mark of breeding. The well dressed man or woman to whom the price of a meal means little or nothing oftentimes complains unnecessarily of service, food and price, making life miserable for both waitress and manager.

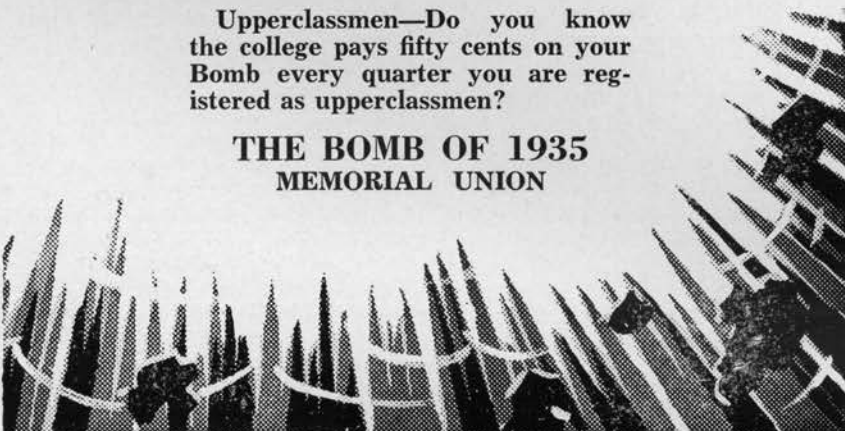
I find the greater number of customers are considerate and interesting people, so I still repeat that it is one of the most interesting and profitable careers that a girl may choose.



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